Abstract Proceedings of the Meeting of the Representative Assembly held at Mysore, being a summary of the discussion which took place on each subject, together with the reply given by the Dewan.

16th October 1891.

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GENERAL SUBJECTS.

Subjects 1 to 10 were introduced by Mr. R. H. Elliot, (R. M., from the South Mysore Planters' Association, Hassan District); subjects 11 and 12 were introduced by Messrs. C. Srinivasa Row and Patnagiri Ranganna, (R. M.s from the Chikmagalur Municipality and Kadur Taluk respectively).

Subject 1. Irrigation Well Rules.

(A) Permanent Assessment of lands commanded by private wells.

Summary of Discussion.—The rules issued with Notification No. 183, dated 21st July 1891, for the grant of loans for the construction of wells for irrigation are extremely valuable and liberal, but they do not go far enough in some respects. For instance, it should be distinctly laid down that land irrigated by wells dug at the occupant's expense will for ever remain at the assessment which is now charged on such land previous to the digging of the well. These are favorable terms when compared with the 30 years' settlement applicable to other lands, but there is nothing new in this proposal to grant such favorable terms. Favorable terms have been granted in times past for enlisting private enterprise in the construction of works of irrigation and the assurance of a permanent settlement on lands irrigated by private wells will attract a large amount of capital now lying idle. The present tenure does not provide adequate security for the capital of an investor in the event of his digging a well. There is no fixity in the tenure, and the rent which the raiyat is called upon to pay to Government is liable to be raised at the end of 30 years for various reasons. It is true that in Section 115 of the Land Revenue Code, Government has declared that it will not enhance the revenue at the end of the 30 years' period on the ground of the improvement effected by the well, but it is evident that as the Government reserves to itself a full right of raising the rent on the holdings, on general grounds, such as the introduction of Railways, the improvement of roads, the rise of prices and so forth, the rents might be enhanced in some degree that was quite indefinite, and if one point alone, the saleable value of the holding, was considered, it would be evident that things were at present on a highly unsatisfactory basis. If a man dug a well during the 20th year of his occupation, or if after having dug a well

at the beginning of his lease, he wished to sell his land within 10 years of the expiration of such lease, no one would give him a good price for the land, simply because a purchaser could not possibly tell to what amount the assessment or revenue would be enhanced at the end of the 30 years' period. Under such circumstances, a capitalist might well hesitate before investing in a well, and we know that the price of land often falls as the period of settlement draws to a close. The benevolent and generous disposition of a Government can hardly be an assurance. Such disposition did not prevent the enhancement of rent on cotton-growing lands in parts of the Bombay Presidency.

(B) Wells to be dug by the State if necessary.

Another respect in which the "Well rules" required modification was this:—

It should be provided in the well rules that an occupier may either take a loan from the Government for digging a well as is at present provided, or have it dug for him by the State, the interest of the outlay, in the latter case, being added to the assessment, and at such a rate as to clear off principal and interest in 30 years.

Wells are dug by professional Waddars. These most frequently cheat, and raiyats often find themselves helpless with regard to these men, so that a provision of the kind suggested would enable the poorer and the more helpless classes of raiyats to get their wells dug by Government Agency, while those who are strong and intelligent enough to cope with the Waddars' tricks will take the advances and employ their own men.

(C) State should dig wells in unoccupied waste when desired.

A third respect in which the "Well rules" required amendment was a provision by which wells would be dug by the State in its waste lands and the irrigable area under them let free of assessment for 5 years and afterwards at full wet assessment. In England a tenant often applies to a landlord and says "if you make these improvements I will take the land and pay you so much rent," and a landlord often incurs a large outlay in consequence. This is especially so in Scotland where very large areas of waste lands have been taken up and cultivated. Here the State is the landlord and the raiyat the tenant, and if the State were prepared to undertake landed improvements of this nature in the same manner as it had done in the case of tanks and river channels, a vast quantity of land would doubtless be profitably brought under irrigation, and irrigation of a kind which has been proved to have held out under the severest droughts.

(D) Extension of Well rules to the whole Country.

Lastly, the "Well rules" recently passed by Government should be extended to the whole country. They are at present applicable to three Districts only, *viz.*, Tumkur, Kolar and Chitaldroog.

(A) *Dewan's reply.*—The remarks and suggestions of Mr. Elliot are evidently well thought out and shall be carefully considered by Government. The recent "Well rules" were sanctioned as an experiment, and shall be modified according to the teachings of experience. It may however here be remarked that the proposed permanent assessment seems neither just nor expedient. The owners of well irrigated lands have no greater claim to have the assessment of these lands declared permanent than other owners of lands which have been improved otherwise than by digging wells. All that may fairly be asked for (and this has already been promised) seems to be that the improvements made by raiyats will not be taken into account in revising the assessment. The principles upon which assessments should be revised on the expiry of the current 30 years' settlement without seriously affecting the value of property are now under the consideration of Government and will be declared ere long.

(B) As to the suggestion that where the raiyats wish the Government should excavate wells for them and charge the cost as an advance to the raiyat, there will be no difficulty in arranging for this though we are under the impression that raiyats would be able to excavate wells more cheaply than Government can do. The Special Assistant Commissioner will be instructed on the point.

(C) The suggestion that Government should excavate wells in unoccupied waste lands and offer the lands to raiyats for cultivation can hardly commend itself to Government. If a raiyat wishes to have well-irrigated land, he has only to apply for the land and for a loan to dig the well and he can have both. If he cannot do this, it is not likely that he will take up land after a well has been excavated in it.

(D) The well rules were applied to three Districts where they were most needed and by way of experiment. But there will be no difficulty in extending them to other Districts also if the people are likely to take advantage of them. Be it remembered that the loans cannot be given to all applicants in one year. All applications will be registered and loans given as funds are available for the purpose.

Note.—For other suggestions regarding the Irrigation Well rules, see subjects Nos., 53 and 280.

Subject No. 2.

Establishment of fuel and fodder reserves in all villages.

Summary of Representation.—Fuel and fodder reserves should be established on lands of all villages wherever land for the purpose can be found. As a grower of grass himself, Mr. Elliot could speak from experience of the enormous advantage that would arise from this in regard to the question of hot weather fodder for cattle. At present when the young grass begins to shoot on the first fall of rain, cattle are at once turned on to it to nibble down every blade as it appears, which